

3 books worth adding to library

There are lots of obscure books about running an office on the market today. These three that I've come across recently are commendable, and just might fill an empty niche in your office library.

■ The first is a wonderful reference book called "How to Run Better Business Meetings" by 3M's Meeting Management Team, McGraw Hill, \$19.95. 3M came out with its first edition of the book in 1964, but its presentation experts revised the volume in 1987.

Different parts of the book will be helpful to different people, depending on their responsibilities for meetings. The first four chapters discuss the fundamentals of good business meetings, such as having and sticking to an agenda.

Then there are chapters for the people coordinating a business meeting. "How to Run Better Business Meetings" provides lots of diagrams and instructions for these folks.

It is an especially good book for an executive assistant or the person assigned to coordinating business meetings in a large corpora-



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tion. ■ Another recently published reference book that will appeal to those in larger corporations is "Recordkeeping Requirements," by Donald S. Skupsky. It is self-published by the author's company, Information Requirements Clearinghouse, 3801 E. Florida Ave., Denver 80210, (303) 691-3600, and it's available for \$28.50.

This book tells you everything you need to know about which records to keep, for how long and why, with all the legal reasons for doing so. It earns its subtitle, "What You Need to Keep and What You Can Safely Destroy." This book will be an excellent investment, especially for companies that have dozens or hundreds of file cabinets filled with business documents.

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This is not a book for pleasure reading. It's written by a lawyer and reads like a legal brief. But that's not all bad. The detail and organization make it an excellent reference and easy-to-use resource.

The only problem I have with "Recordkeeping Requirements" is the author's questionable philosophy that you should toss out some records as soon as you're able, just so that you won't be open to lawsuits. He supports this philosophy with the example of Manville Corp., the asbestos manufacturer sued for endangering employees' health. I have an ethical problem with throwing out records so you can't be sued by employees who were harmed by the product they were handling.

■ The third book is more specialized but probably applies to more employees. It's called "How to Prevent Office Chair Backache and Sitting Fatigue," and it's available free from Frank Eastern Co., 599 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012, (212) 219-0007.

Forget the fact that Eastern is

one of the largest office furniture mail-order companies. Most of the information it contains is sensible and will be valued by the person in your office who has the responsibility for buying or leasing office furniture, such as chairs, desks and computer workstations.

My only complaint with the book is its endorsement of the Balans chair, a funny-looking chair on which the sitter kneels. It is claimed to be good for people who have back problems. Eastern admits that some people find these alternative chairs awkward and that other people just aren't able to adjust to them. But he doesn't come out and say what I and everyone else in my office have found: That the darn thing is just plain uncomfortable. I spent \$220 for one of these chairs, and it sits in the office, unused.

Hillel Segal's column includes evaluations of gadgets, seminars and books designed to enhance business productivity. Segal is a management consultant based in Boulder.